



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: NICK HOLDER, (202) 225-3826 (BISHOP)
MEGHAN DUBYAK, (202) 225-3335 (ISRAEL)

Bishop and Israel Hail Passage of Bill to Save Summer Flounder Industry
Congressmen Answered Pleas of Long Island Fishermen

Washington, DC – Early Saturday Morning, Congress passed H.R. 5946, a bill to update the Magnuson-Stevens Act, which governs U.S. fishing policy. Included in the legislation is a provision advocated by Bishop and Israel to substantially increase the number of summer flounder, also known as fluke, which fishermen would be allowed to catch next year. The industry was facing massive cuts in 2007 under a proposal by the Department of Commerce.

“Long Island fishermen received an early present this year,” Bishop said. “A shutdown of summer flounder fishing on Long Island would mean the loss of millions of tourist dollars. I’m pleased that Congress acted in support of Long Island’s fishermen,” stated Bishop.

“Long Island’s fishing industry is critical to our economy and is one of the great things about living on Long Island,” said Israel. “I’m glad that I could work with Congressman Bishop to help protect this industry and our economy.”

Earlier this year, the Administration pegged the number of summer flounder that were allowed to be caught in 2007 at 5.2 million pounds, a 78 percent reduction from 2006. Nearly 3,000 concerned Long Islanders contacted Congressmen Bishop and Israel pushing for an increase and some flexibility. Bishop and Israel wrote the Commerce Department twice since mid-October to advocate for Long Island’s anglers.

Captain Jim House, of the North Fork Captains Association was pleased with passage of the bill. “I would like to compliment Congressmen Bishop and Israel for their persistent, cooperative efforts in ushering the renewed Magnuson-Stevens Act through the House of Representatives. The passage of this bill brought together environmental and fishing constituents to achieve the best possible avenue to a sustainable fishery.

The Administration provided a meager increase to 12 million pounds, but it wasn’t until Congress stepped in that real relief was provided. The Magnuson-Stevens Act will more than triple the original Commerce Department proposal. For 2007, it is estimated that the total for summer flounder will be 17.1 million pounds. In addition, the allotment will increase in 2008 to 19.6 million pounds, followed by 22.7 million pounds in 2009 and ending with 29 million pounds in 2012.

The Magnuson-Stevens Act is the primary law that provides authority for fishery management in all federal waters. The House passed the Magnuson bill unanimously early Saturday morning. The legislation still requires the President’s signature before it is enacted as law.

###